

# ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

## *Policies and Procedures*

***Title:*** Field Office Recruitment and Selection

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This P&P establishes procedures for the recruitment and tentative selection of candidates for certain positions at NASS field offices. It also explains which forms candidates and appointees must complete and submit through their field offices to EMS's Personnel Division.

## Table Of Contents

1.	Introduction . . . . .	3
2.	Types of Appointments . . . . .	3
	Career-Conditional Appointments . . . . .	3
	Excepted Appointments . . . . .	3
	Temporary Limited Appointments . . . . .	4
3.	Required Action Prior to Recruitment . . . . .	5
4.	Requesting and Working a Certificate in Field Offices . . . . .	5
5.	Procedures Following Tentative Selection . . . . .	6
6.	Bringing the Appointee on Duty . . . . .	8
7.	Summary of Responsibilities . . . . .	10
8.	Glossary . . . . .	11

## 1. Introduction

NASS state statistical offices may recruit for and appoint individuals to certain positions as set forth in EAA P&P 1030-NASS, “Delegations of Authority.” This P&P discusses for which types of appointments field offices may recruit and select, and the proper procedures for completing such actions.

## 2. Types of Appointments

EMS's Classification and Employment Branch (CEB) must approve all appointments. The following appointments represent those used most commonly in field offices with delegated recruiting authority. In situations where none of the appointments listed below are appropriate, the field office should contact CEB.

### Career-Conditional Appointments

Normally given to persons hired from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) certificates of eligibles (or an equivalent competitive process such as direct hire) to fill permanent positions continuing for more than 1 year. These appointees acquire competitive status after successful completion of a 1-year probationary period, but continue to serve under career-conditional tenure for another 2 years. After 3 years of continuous career-conditional service, employees meet the service requirement for career tenure.

### Excepted Appointments

Appointments not subject to the competitive requirements of OPM rules and regulations are called “excepted appointments.”

- **Schedule A (G) Authority** is used to fill non-temporary positions, in which tours of duty are intermittent or part-time and are limited by the amount of compensation earned in a service year. Under this appointment no employee may earn more than 40 percent of the annual rate for the first step of grade GS-3 in a service year. This limitation on compensation includes any premium pay for overtime, night, Sunday, or holiday work.

- **Schedule A (Q) Authority** is used to fill student assistant positions GS-9 and below, in which tours of duty are full-time during summer and vacation periods, and part-time or intermittent during school sessions. Under this appointment, employees may work no more than 1040 hours in a service year.
- **Schedule A (V) Authority** is used to fill temporary summer aid positions between May 13 and September 30 only. Youths who meet the economic needs standards prescribed by OPM, or applicants who are mentally retarded or severely physically handicapped may fill these positions. The employees are appointed to positions that require no specific knowledge or skills and are paid the minimum wage as established by the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- **Schedule A (W) Authority** is used to fill positions when students/employees need the earnings from this appointment to continue in school. Applicants must be enrolled in school and meet OPM requirements for financial assistance. Under this appointment, employees may not work more than 20 hours per week; however, they can work full-time during summer and vacation periods. Appointments cannot be made between May 13 and August 31, inclusive.

## Temporary Limited Appointments

Most temporary limited appointments do not exceed 1 year. Field offices may make temporary limited appointments with or without registers of eligibles. Field offices must request extensions of temporary limited appointments through CEB.

- **The Not-to-Exceed 1 Year Appointment** may be made without regard to OPM registers (but is subject to CEB's approval) provided that:
  - the field office submits a justification for filling a position on a temporary basis with form SF-52, Request for Personnel Action;
  - the field office assists the CEB in conducting competition by posting an announcement in the field office, Federal Job Information Centers, and state employment offices;
  - the appointment must be at grade GS-12 or below;
  - the appointee must meet the qualification standards for the position including written or performance tests where appropriate; and
  - appointments under this authority may not be made to extend some other authority.
- **Noncompetitive Temporary Limited Appointments** may be used for reinstatements,

transfers, Peace Corps and Vista volunteers, and former Canal Zone employees.

- **Thirty-day Special Need**, limited to 1 month (30 calendar days) within a given 12-month period, may be used to meet any legitimate need that cannot be met by any other existing appointment authority. Field offices must submit justification for special needs by using form SF-52.

### 3. Required Action Prior to Recruitment

When exercising delegated recruiting authority, field offices must have positions classified and authorized by CEB, along with authorization to fill vacancies from NASS. Field officials must:

- complete and submit an original form ADM-006, Request for Authority to Fill Vacancies, or a memorandum of request, to NASS's Human Resources Staff (HRS) for the State Statistical Division's approval.
- upon approval of the ADM-006 from the State Statistical Division via HRS, prepare form SF-52 and include the approval number at the top of the SF-52.
- submit form SF-52 and any required attachments to CEB and a copy of the SF-52 to HRS's Personnel Liaison Office.
- file form ADM-006.

### 4. Requesting and Working a Certificate in Field Offices

To request a certificate, field offices must take the following actions:

- Prepare a form SF-52 to fill an established position and submit it to CEB. Contact a personnel specialist for instructions and/or discussion of current procedures. (This chapter describes suggested procedures.)
- Prepare an original and four copies of form SF-39, Request for Referral of Eligibles. Call CEB for the Certificate Request Number and for clearance of any employment priority list (PL).
- Send the original and two copies of form SF-39, a copy of the position description, and job

analysis, if appropriate, to the OPM Area Office. Send one copy of form SF-39 to CEB and retain one copy for reference.

- Upon receipt of form SF-39 from OPM, prepare an original and two copies of form OF-5, Inquiry as to Availability, for each eligible listed.
  - Write identical information on all OF-5s to the candidates on the same Certificate of Eligibles.
  - Use the “Other Pertinent Job Information” space to note the telephone number for requesting an interview and other pertinent facts about employment conditions or the position.
- Photocopy the SF-39. Send the original SF-39 and a copy of each OF-5 to CEB.
- Send the original OF-5, a blank SF-171, and a return envelope to each eligible. Allow at least 10 days for local eligibles, and 15 days for eligibles outside the local area, to reply. In rush situations, contact the individuals by telegram or telephone.
  - If a reply is received, destroy the file copy of the OF-5.
  - If a reply is not received, attach the file copy of the OF-5 to the file copy of the SF-39. When contacting the eligibles by telephone, to expedite the certificate or because they did not respond to form OF-5, carefully document all conversations and complete a record of oral declination, if appropriate. (See the *NASS Administrative Technician's Manual* for examples of oral declinations.)
- After the return of all OF-5s, schedule and conduct interviews, and tentatively select a potential candidate from the three highest rated eligibles for appointment.<sup>1</sup> (Contact CEB to re-check the PL, and discuss documentation of certificate and qualifications of the tentative selectee.)
- Inform the candidate of the tentative selection with the caution not to give up present employment until CEB formally approves the appointment.

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<sup>1</sup>Preferred eligible veterans (TP, XP, CP) have preference over non-preferred eligibles whose names are lower on the certificate. If the first three available candidates are preferred eligible veterans, select any one, regardless of the score. If an eligible veteran is interested in the appointment but does not meet physical, knowledge/skill, or other requirements, the field office may tentatively select a lower standing candidate. However, it must submit a full justification for passing over eligible veterans to CEB.

## 5. Procedures Following Tentative Selection

CEB is responsible for all suitability inquiries; however, field offices can expedite the employment process by initiating them. Suitability inquiries are **not** required for (1) 30-day special need appointments, or (2) appointments to temporary, seasonal, or intermittent positions for periods limited to 6 months or less.

- Prepare the following forms in duplicate to gather data on the applicant's past employment and education, and from appropriate law enforcement agencies and, if necessary, personal references:
  - form OF-49, Inquiry for United States Government Use Only (Reference and Employment Inquiry).<sup>2</sup>
  - form OF-50, Inquiry for United States Government Use Only (Educational Inquiry), if necessary.
  - form OF-51, Inquiry for United States Government Use Only (Law Enforcement Inquiry).
- Send the appropriate original OF-49 (to past employers and personal references), OF-50 (to schools and colleges, if necessary), and OF-51 (to law enforcement agencies) along with return envelopes addressed to the proper personnel management specialist in CEB.
- Send the following documents to CEB:
  - form SF-171, Application for Federal Employment.
  - form EMS-527, Applicant's Statement of Selective Service Registration, for all male appointees born after December 31, 1959.
  - if form SF-39 was used, submit **all** remaining OF-5s and attachments, either the original or suspense file copy, depending upon whether the candidate returned the

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<sup>2</sup>When making telephone inquiries, summarize information on a form OF-49 or in a memorandum. Contact CEB immediately if derogatory information is gathered which reflects on the candidate's suitability or loyalty.

original to the field office. Include all:

- documentation as a result of conversations with the applicant and a completed record of an oral declination, if appropriate.
- envelopes and enclosures returned by the Postal Service marked “Unclaimed,” etc.
- inquiries (i.e., forms OF-49, 50, and 51), if conducted.

**Do not keep any copies or documentation.** CEB will then initiate suitability inquiries if not done by the field office, evaluate suitability inquiries, and determine whether further investigation is required. Finally, CEB will approve or disapprove the selection of the applicant and notify the field office of the decision.

## 6. Bringing the Appointee on Duty

After approving the selection, CEB forwards an orientation kit and checklist to the field office for the appointee. The field office then informs the applicant of selection and agrees on the date that the appointee will enter on duty. Upon entry on duty, the new hire must complete the following forms and the field office must send them to CEB immediately after entrance on duty. Delay in submission of appointment forms may delay receipt of the employee's salary check.

- form SF-61. The State Statistician (someone with delegated authority) or a Notary Public may administer the oath of office.
- form SF-61B, Declaration of Appointee.<sup>3</sup>
- form AD-349, Declaration Sheet.<sup>4</sup>
- form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate.

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<sup>3</sup>Use to capture information that coincides with the SF-171 and covers the time period between submitting the SF-171 and entrance on duty.

<sup>4</sup>Use for the employee's home and check mailing address, if the employee does not want direct deposit to a financial institution. Use form SF-1199A, if the employee desires direct deposit of payroll checks to a financial institution.



- applicable state withholding exemption certificate.
- form SF-177, Statement of Physical Ability for Light Duty Work.
- form SF-256, Self-Identification of Handicap.
- form SF-181, Race and National Origin Identification.
- form SF-85, Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions.<sup>5</sup>
- form SF-87, Fingerprint Chart.<sup>6</sup>
- form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form.

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<sup>5</sup>Obtain a form SF-85 from all candidates whose appointments exceeds 6 months. Information on the SF-85 must agree with the information on the SF-171.

<sup>6</sup>Take two sets of fingerprints on the SF-87. Direct candidates who require fingerprinting to a local police station, Post Office, Courthouse, or other Government agency that has proper facilities. **Do not hold,** instead send all copies to CEB with the SF-85.

## **7. Summary of Responsibilities**

### **Classification and Employment Branch, Personnel Division, EMS**

- Provides advice to and works with NASS Field Offices having recruitment responsibilities.
- Approves or disapproves all recommended employment activities included in this handbook.
- Approves classification of positions and position descriptions and provides copies to supervisors and employees.
- Assures completion of documents necessary for recruitment and selection of candidates.
- Verifies status of candidates and determines eligibility.
- Maintains all official personnel records.

### **Field Offices with Delegated Recruiting Authority**

- Seek applicants and/or provide employment information to interested people in the local community and academic institutions.
- Advise potential applicants of necessary steps to obtain eligibility for Federal appointment through OPM (i.e. testing information, vacancy announcements, etc.).
- Obtain certificate of eligibles from the OPM Area Office to use in filling single interval positions from clerical registers.
- Tentatively select appointees, initiate suitability checks, and obtain required appointment forms.
- Contact applicants, document certificates, and forward data to CEB for final approval and signature of every certificate received from OPM.
- Ensure that the employee does not exceed any limitation as to salary amount, number of days, or working hours permitted by the type of appointment.

## 8. Glossary

**CEB.** Classification and Employment Branch, Personnel Division, EMS.

**Certificate of Eligibles.** A list of eligibles from a particular register maintained by OPM or EMS.

**Certification.** The process by which the OPM provides names of eligibles for appointment.

**Eligible.** Any applicant who meets the required qualifications for a given position, which may include passing a written examination (such as the clerical test) and receiving a valid Notice of Results.

**Form OF-5.** Inquiry as to Availability.

**Form SF-39.** Request for Referral of Eligibles.

**Form SF-52.** Request for Personnel Action.

**Form SF-171.** Application for Federal Employment.

**OPM.** Office of Personnel Management.

**Priority List (PL).** A list of career and career-conditional employees an agency has **separated** because of reduction-in-force, or compensable injury or disability requiring a year or more of recovery. When a qualified person is available on this list, an agency may **not** fill a competitive position by transfer or by a new appointment, except in the case of 10 point preference eligibles. The PL differs from priority placement in that the PL concerns employees who have actually been separated from the Federal service, while the priority placement program assists those who have been reduced in grade and retained.

**Register.** A list of eligibles compiled and maintained by OPM from which certificates of eligibles are prepared.

**Reinstatement.** Noncompetitive reemployment in the competitive service based on previous service under a career or career-conditional appointment. Non-veteran employees who previously had career-conditional tenure are eligible for reinstatement within 3 years following the date of separation. Former career-conditional employees entitled to veteran's preference and former employees who have completed the 3-year service requirement for career tenure are eligible for reinstatement with no time limitation.

**Suitability Check.** The screening of an applicant's background using forms OF-49, OF-50, and OF-51 to determine an applicant's suitability and loyalty.

**Transfer.** The movement of an employee with career or career-conditional status from one Federal agency to another.